Claims

1. A method of treating a product which is made of a material which has or materials which have been applied to a surface in a liquid form and thereafter have dried or cured to make the product ready for use, wherein the edges of a sheet of impermeable sheet material are secured to a surface of the product to be treated to enclose a space between the surface and the sheet, heating is applied within the space, and the gaseous contents of the space are continuously extracted while the sheet is held spaced from the surface to allow gas and vapour to be extracted from any area of the surface beneath the sheet.

2. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the impermeable sheet material is secured to the surface by adhesive tape around the edges of the material, so that a space is provided between the impermeable sheet material and the surface.

3. A method as claimed in Claim 1 ~~or Claim 2,~~ wherein the impermeable sheet material has edges which are capable of forming an air tight seal when pulled against the surface by a vacuum.

4. A method as claimed in ~~any preceding claim~~ claim 1, wherein a vacuum pump is connected to the space to provide the extraction facility.

5. A method as claimed in ~~any preceding claim,~~ claim 1 wherein a vacuum is produced in the space before beginning to apply heat within the space.

6. A method as claimed in ~~any preceding claim,~~ claim 1 wherein a vacuum at a level of about 2 - 5 mb Abs is produced and maintained in the space.

7. A method as claimed in ~~any preceding claim,~~ claim 1 wherein the product is a glassfibre moulding made with a polyester resin and the surface within the space is heated to a temperature of between 80°C and 90°C.

8. A method as claimed in ~~any preceding claim,~~ claim 1 wherein the product is a glassfibre moulding with an outer gelcoat and wherein the sheet material is secured to the surface after affected gelcoat, and any physically damaged material has been removed from the surface.

9. A method as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the treatment is completed by replacing removed gelcoat with fresh gelcoat.

10. A method of treating a boat hull moulded from fibre reinforced plastics, wherein the edges of a sheet of impermeable sheet material are secured to a surface of the hull to be treated to enclose a space between the surface and the sheet, heating is applied within the space, and the gaseous contents of the space are continuously extracted while the sheet is held spaced from the surface to allow gas and vapour to be extracted from any area of the surface beneath the sheet.

11. Apparatus for treating a product made of a material which has or materials which have been applied to a surface in a liquid form and thereafter have dried or cured to make the product ready for use, the apparatus comprising an impermeable sheet, means for securing the sheet to a surface of the product to be treated to enclose

a space between the surface and the sheet, means for holding the sheet spaced from the surface to allow gas and vapour to be extracted from any area of the surface beneath the sheet, heating means for applying heat within the space and means for continuously extracting the gaseous contents of the space.

12. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the means for extracting the gaseous contents of the space is a vacuum pump capable of working down to pressures of 5 to 2 mb Abs.

13. Apparatus as claimed in Claim 11 ~~or Claim 12,~~ wherein the heating means includes a thermostat and a controller so that a constant temperature can be maintained within the space.

14. Apparatus as claimed in ~~any one of Claims 11 to 13,~~ claim 11 wherein the sheet has thermal insulation properties.

15. Apparatus as claimed in ~~any one of Claims 11 to 14,~~ claim 11 including sheets of differing sizes and differing shapes, so that the method can be carried out on product areas of various shapes.

16. Apparatus as claimed in ~~any one of Claims 11 to 15,~~ claim 11 wherein the edges of the sheet are of a material which will form an air-tight seal against the surface when pulled against the surface by a vacuum.

~~16.~~ A method of treating a product moulded from fibre reinforced plastics, wherein impermeable sheet material is secured to a surface of the product to be treated to enclose a space between the surface and the layer, heating

is applied within the space, and the gaseous contents of the space are continuously extracted.

17. A method of treating a product moulded from fibre reinforced plastics, substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings

18. Apparatus for treating a product moulded from fibre reinforced plastics substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings

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